

Ora Lee Flanagan

By herself

I was the youngest of three children born to Samuel Morrell Flanagan and Ora Tugwell during the depression years, July 16, 1929, in Pitt County, NC. I was delivered by a family doctor, Dr. Joyner, who came to the home for deliveries.

Like most families at that point we were poor but as a youngster, I was easily entertained with a doll dressed in clothes my mother made and boxes strategically placed in the yard among trees to form a playhouse. Tobacco twine made perfect room dividers and mud pies served as the food offered there. Jar lids made good pie pans.

Aunt Carrie, my mother's sister, came once a week and brought candy for the kids. It was the highlight of the week. Funny, but I never felt poor because we always had what we needed. Dad bought sugar, flour, and salt. Otherwise, we raised what ever was required to make us feel as blessed as anyone. Mother often made our clothes from fabric that came from flour sacks. (It was quite nice!)

I started school in Fountain but in the middle of first grade we moved to Farmville (in the country) and went to school there until I graduated.

Starting at nine years, I helped with the tobacco harvest, handing to the person who tied it to the stick. Those were the longest days I ever spent. However, I was with my Daddy!! Those were the times I learned more about his true character than any other. He was a strong, determined, honest, compassionate person who was kind to the tenants on the farm as he was to us. They respected him and so did I.

At thirteen years of age, I moved to the Davis Hotel in Farmville where Daddy ran the hotel until they opted to tear it down.

School was always good. I was an average student with an above average need to talk and have fun, but with lots of luck and teachers who knew how to keep me in tow, I graduated in 1949 and attended WCUNC where I took a pre-nursing (2 1/2 year) course and transferred to the Medical College of Virginia in Richmond where I received a B.S. in nursing. It was there that I met and married Clarence W. Taylor, Jr., in 1953.

Clarence had two more years of medical school, so I taught Nursing Arts at Saint Elizabeth's Hospital during that time. Clarence interned at UNC Chapel Hill for two years and I worked in the ER, in surgery and ob/gyn. Our first son was born in 1956. I retired to care for him and did not return to nursing.